



LUMPKIN COUNTY
Board of Commissioners
Special Called Work Session Agenda
Commissioners Boardroom

April 4, 2022
9:00 AM

- **CALL TO ORDER**
- **DISCUSS LAND USE CODE DRAFT REVISIONS**
 1. Land Use Code Revisions
- **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Dockery

LUMPKIN COUNTY
Board of Commissioners
Special Called Work Session Minutes
Commissioners Boardroom



April 4, 2022
9:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM by Chairman Chris Dockery

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Chris Dockery	Chairman	Present	
Tucker Greene	District 1 Commissioner	Present	
Bobby Mayfield	District 2 Commissioner	Present	
Rhett Stringer	District 3 Commissioner	Present	
Jeffrey Moran	District 4 Commissioner	Present	

DISCUSS LAND USE CODE DRAFT REVISIONS

Land Use Code Revisions

Land Use Code Revisions

Planning Director Bruce Georgia went over a PowerPoint presentation about the draft Land Use Code revisions. He first outlined the major items that have remained the same, and then major items that are changing. He discussed conditional uses and how the SLUA process would be different. Commissioner Mayfield asked as far as road classifications, is there a process for a road to get reclassified later on if it changes? Mr. Georgia responded yes, and said it would go through the County Engineer, Mr. Reiter. Chairman Dockery asked some questions about the process for classifying the roads. He said the classification process needs to be in writing so it is objective, as it seems a bit too subjective now. Commissioner Mayfield agreed that we need objective criteria and a process for reclassifying roads as they grow.

There was discussion between Mr. Reiter and the Commissioners about the difference between arterial and collector roads. Mr. Reiter said arterial roads are roads that function as a network through the County. Collector roads may have as high of a traffic count as arterial roads, but they are not an artery that moves through the County. They typically provide access to many local roads, but are not necessarily a corridor for moving from one place to another. Chairman Dockery said there may be people who want to have their road upgraded from a local road to a collector road, since local roads seem to be the most restrictive to businesses. We will need to be able to define and defend what a local road is, he stated. We will have to answer people when they ask why their road is a particular category. Mr. Reiter said he would work on improving those definitions. There was additional discussion over how staff had developed the classifications, involving things such as the road geometry, traffic count, and number of attached roads. They also discussed how the width of a road may affect its classification due to safety. Chairman Dockery suggested that if a developer wanted a road to be upgraded, they would have to improve it to meet certain criteria. That way, if a development is going to increase traffic, the road will be brought up to a standard for traffic to navigate safely.

Mr. Georgia then moved on to the General Development and Restricted Development categories and the schedule of permitted activities. He believes this will be sufficient to capture most of the activities coming in. He elaborated on the compatibility performance standards and how to read the chart. Mr. Georgia also discussed the Conditional Use activities and the activities requiring Special Land Use Approvals. He said staff has been working with their attorneys on this draft.

Commissioner Moran asked if anything not on the charts is subject to a SLUA? Mr. Georgia responded yes. They will be put in a certain category by the Planning Director, and if the developer disagrees with it they can appeal to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Moran asked about commercial outdoor gun ranges, and Mr. Georgia said they will not be allowed. Chairman Dockery said he wanted to discuss that. He said if he hypothetically had 1,000 acres and wanted to put a gun range dead-center, why should he not be allowed to do that? He said he does not want to have a knee-jerk reaction and ban all outdoor gun ranges just because of the issue with the one on Porter Springs. There may be a situation where one could work successfully. Commissioner Mayfield said we could still have some reasonable criteria, as we owe it to our citizens to regulate commercial gun ranges.

Chairman Dockery brought up the recent Land Use Revisions survey that was on the County website. He said according to the number of people who completed the survey, only about 2 out of every 1,000 residents participated. He said the BOC needs to be careful not to "over-correct" or over-react to the results of the survey because it does not represent the entire population. We need to look at it objectively, not emotionally. He said we can take a short break and then go over the revisions section by section.

There was a break from 10:07 am to 10:24 am.

Upon returning from the break, the Commissioners went over the chart of permitted activities by section. Chairman Dockery read each item aloud and asked the Commissioners if they recommended any alterations. They discussed Addiction Treatment Facilities and possibly dividing that into Limited and Extensive. There was discussion over Animal Facilities and Animal Operations, and whether regulations should only cover commercial activities or private. Chairman Dockery suggested creating a standalone category for game processing, and he questioned if beekeeping should even be included in the regulations. There was additional discussion over small radio station buildings, campgrounds, retail, gun & archery ranges, manufacturing, outdoor storage, sawmills, towing/impound lots, and short-term rentals. The draft regulations stated that no short-term rentals would be allowed in platted subdivisions, but the Commissioners wanted that removed since it is more of a civil issue governed by HOAs. Chairman Dockery said he was not in favor of government regulating subdivisions.

There was discussion over possibly extending the moratorium. Commissioner Mayfield said the draft should be put out there for the public, and Mr. Georgia said it has been posted and he updates it frequently as changes are made. The Chairman said we don't have to release every single rough draft because it might create unnecessary panic. We should refine it and only then release it for public review. Regarding all of the changes that have been made tonight, Mr. Georgia asked if the Public Hearing tomorrow would still be necessary. Chairman Dockery said we could still hold the hearing and go over some of the suggested changes from tonight.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

A citizen came up (no name provided) and said she is very unsophisticated with computers. She said she would like someone to explain to her how to navigate the website, because she was not aware of the survey and could not find it. She said she did not see it advertised in the newspaper, and she reads the paper every week. Chairman Dockery asked her to provide her information to staff so they could assist her.

Steve Sylvester said he is discouraged by the lack of participation in the survey. However, he said elections are not cancelled just because not many people show up to vote; the results of the vote are respected. The people who participated are the people who care. Mr. Sylvester suggested for any commercial businesses, they should have a 100 foot minimum buffer in Restricted Development areas in order to preserve low density development. For single family residences and short-term rentals, he suggested a 2-acre minimum instead of a 1-acre minimum lot size. He also expressed concern about a section involving property owner consent where a developer could proceed with loosened restrictions if he/she receives consent from neighboring property owners. Mr. Sylvester said those restrictions are not put in just to protect immediate neighbors, but to protect the rural character of the area. Mr. Georgia explained that section presently means the Planning Commission will ask the applicant if they have a letter from neighbors stating they have no problem with the proposed use, and the Commission will typically accept it. It saves the applicant time and money, which has been the rationale for that option. Chairman Dockery pointed out that certain uses cannot be exempted just because of neighbor approval. Mr. Sylvester said perhaps it could be something included on property deeds if it was an agreement involving the neighbors.

Mr. Sylvester asked for clarification on several more sections, including hardship variances, subdivision greenspaces, and SLUAs. After all of these changes, he felt as if tomorrow would be a bad time for a public hearing as well. He said the final copy of the revisions should be publicly available for a week or two, and only then should the public hearing be scheduled. He thanked the Commissioners for providing time for him to comment. Chairman Dockery said we can extend the process if needed, and he said the BOC always tries to be as transparent as possible. He said it has been frustrating to have so many opportunities for public comment, but not many people show up. He stated the public's feedback is very important to the process.

Robin Hall said he is grateful for all of the work that Bruce Georgia has done during these revisions. He agreed with the direction of the changes but thinks the public will need more time to look over the draft. He said if something is worth doing, we need to do it right. He said there are certain things that developers/owners should have to disclose in applications. The LLC system of Georgia is very good at disguising the true, beneficial owner of a property. Mr. Hall said the true owner should be disclosed on all application forms. He also observed that even after approval has been granted, a lot of responsibility falls on different county departments, the State, and even federal agencies like the EPA. He thinks the application should also include what other organizations will be involved, and whether or not they have been consulted. Mr. Hall stated there should be a process for how to handle out of the ordinary uses, like a satellite launch pad. He also mentioned the issue of landfills and asked if we would ever open another landfill, and he said all business applicants should include information on what they plan to do with their solid and liquid waste. Mr. Hall said he was thankful this issue is being taken so seriously by the County.

Chairman Dockery asked Mr. Hall for his opinion on what to do with waste. He said he does not think Lumpkin County needs a landfill, but what should we do to prepare going forward to take care of disposing waste? Mr. Hall said this is not a problem unique to Lumpkin County. It should be a multi-county effort involving the surrounding counties. He is not a waste disposal expert, but he has seen that recycling is no longer economically viable as a business, so a solution will have to be found. One thing to do would be to encourage low-waste products that use less packaging.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 PM.

May 17, 2022

Date



Melissa Witcher

County Clerk, Lumpkin County



Chris Dockery, Chairman

Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners